

**Canadian Society of
Presbyterian
History**

Papers 2017

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Edited by Kate Revington

the Protestant anglophone community was almost defined by its position as a minority Christian alternative. A loyalty to the religious establishment prompted Protestants in Québec to find their alternative identity in the local parish or congregation, defined by who their minister was. It was no accident that, in the raging debates before 10 June 1925, Montréal became a centre of Presbyterian opposition to church union. Among Québec Protestants, there was an in-bred suspicion of ecclesiastical power and authority. Stanford Reid was a true anglophone Quebecer.

Reid's 1935 McGill master's thesis, titled *The Church of Scotland in Lower Canada*, was also a tract against religious repression, albeit of a Protestant variety. The Scots as well as the English for the Church of England insisted on their rights in British North America. "The Kirk started a movement which led to the downfall of all thought of an [ecclesiastical] establishment in the Canadas."² The Scots in Canada would have their Reformation identity respected where they had settled. They insisted there would be no repression of their faith in the interest of conformity. Theirs, also, was a Reformation heritage.

After graduating in 1938 from Westminster Theological Seminary, Reid went on to complete doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania. His area of research was the 15th-century preparation for the Scottish Reformation. This research answered the question of why Scotland had provided such fertile soil for the Reformation and welcomed the teachings of George Wishart and John Knox. It also addressed what people could learn from this today. While in self-imposed exile, Reid was applying the ecclesiology of Westminster's founder, J. Gresham Machen, to the Presbyterian Church in Canada and its theological diversity as it emerged from the church union struggle.

Reid returned to a Canada at war, took a church in Montréal, and later established a new congregation in the Town of Mount Royal, which exemplified the Reformation ideal: a theologically instructed laity with a knowledgeable and personal faith commitment and a committed membership. At the same time, Reid was a lecturer (and after 1948, an assistant professor) in the History Department at McGill University.

In a bitter conflict during the 1950 and 1951 General Assemblies, Reid was finally turned down for an appointment as professor of Church History at Presbyterian College, Montreal. His reputation as an outspoken contrarian seeking to call the PCC back to its Reformation roots made him controversial. The qualms of Robert Lennox, the principal, an erstwhile friend and fellow Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship chapter member, were too great. Lennox had grown up in Ottawa's Gospel Tabernacle and had attended Princeton Seminary where his lectures on the Old Testament were shaped.

Advocating Reformation Values

So, deprived of an official platform for his concerns about the PCC, Reid launched a magazine. Predictably, it was titled *Reformation Today*. Reid's opening salvo was passionate:

What the Church needs today is first of all to return to those basic Reformation doctrines. The Protestant Reformation always insisted that the Church must keep close to the Scriptures as the only true basis of Christian knowledge and feeling. It was as a result of these basic Biblical studies that they were able to formulate fundamental Protestant doctrines such as the authority of the Bible, justification by faith, and salvation by grace."³

² W. S. Reid, *The Church of Scotland in Lower Canada* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1938), 120.

³ *Reformation Today* (October 1951): 10.

To Reid, the Reformation was not only a recovery of biblical truth; it was also a renewal of Christian experience. “What is needed is a revival of Protestant spiritual vigor. There is a new need for that enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and aggressiveness which characterized the sixteenth century Reformation.”⁴

Reid’s advocacy of a return to the values of the Reformation was also practical and pastoral. Another article on the next page advocated the “family altar” as the cornerstone of the Reformation: “Before there can be any revival of, or reformation of, the church, we must rebuild the family’s religious foundations.”⁵ Like Luther, Reid, though childless himself, was committed to a Christian experience that was nurtured in the home.

“What was the Protestant Reformation?” Reid asked in the next issue of *Reformation Today*. “Most people are very vague about the Reformation. Even those who consider themselves fairly knowledgeable, think that it was led by two men” — Luther and Calvin. “With the revival of the knowledge of justification by faith,” religion had become “much more personal.” Reid frequently quoted Calvin’s great prayer and motto: “My heart I offer to you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely.”

Coming out of the church union controversy in which his father and Uncle Allan had played prominent roles, Reid defended the importance of a confessionally identifiable denomination in *Reformation Today*. He refused to apologize for the multiplicity of Protestant denominations as the so-called tragic legacy of the Reformation. “Truth at the expense of peace” was the title of an article in the second issue of *Reformation Today*. It provided a strong reaction against the ecumenical movement then at its height in North America. Reid considered the whole 1950s impetus towards organic church union for Presbyterians a denial of all that they had stood for in 1925, but more seriously, a denial of their Reformation heritage.

Reformation Today also put the spotlight on controversies in the PCC otherwise censored for public debate. It did so in the name of the Reformation: “. . . some people have criticized *Reformation Today* because it has dealt, and intends to deal with, controversial matters. The situation in the British Guiana mission field should be raised.” The resignation of the entire PCC mission in the colony because of differences with Secretary W. A. Camron over whether missionary work was evangelistic, setting out to convert people to Christianity, or merely educational, had shattered the uneasy peace that had existed in the denomination since church union. At that time, a quarter-century earlier, a precarious peace, a moratorium on controversy, had prevailed while the denomination struggled to get back on its feet after the losses of church union. *Reformation Today*, reflecting the personality of its editor, was outspoken in its mission to recover Reformation truth in a denomination whose theological integrity, it maintained, had been seriously compromised.

Presbyterian Commitments, Evangelical Perspectives

Reformation Today had a short life of only four years. Failing finances and other pressing concerns for Reid as an academic administrator made its demise inevitable. Reid became deeply committed to the PCC locally and nationally. Locally, as chair of the Presbytery of Montreal’s Church Extension Committee, he established eight new congregations. Nationally, he improved the Church’s tottering financial situation by establishing an Administrative Council and introducing sound business procedures.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 11.

Reid's reputation extended beyond Canada through his writing, particularly in *Christianity Today*, where he was a regular contributor. The magazine, funded by oil tycoon J. Howard Pew, made Evangelicals front and centre in North America with every clergyperson receiving a free subscription. Reid's first article in the magazine (he would write 29 in all in the next two decades) was featured prominently on the masthead. Titled "The Reformation and the Common Man," it presented John Calvin as "the more thorough and consistent thinker of the Reformation" and emphasized the egalitarian and democratic dimension of the Protestant Reformation. Reid thus distanced himself from the politics of J. Howard Pew (who, fortunately for Reid, was an admirer of John Calvin). Reid provided an alternative voice to the right-wing hysteria then dominating American evangelical political thinking.

The Legacy of the Scottish Reformation

The year 1960 — the 400th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation — provided an opportunity for celebration and reflection on the present state of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Reid was invited to address both the Synod of Toronto and Kingston and the Synod of the Maritime Provinces. There were three lectures: "The Scottish Reformation: A National Revolution," "John Knox and the Scottish Reformation," and "The Scottish Reformation after Four Hundred Years." The final presentation, for those who stayed, delivered a challenge to the PCC at a time, it would later become evident, when its greatest influence and membership were peaking. Reid wrote that

as a church the Presbyterian Church in Canada must take into account the fact that the Scottish Reformation still controls and influences much of its life. On the other hand, not infrequently when we most explicitly lay claim to follow the Reformation we vary most widely from its basic spirit and outlook. Consequently it seems that in attempting to evaluate the Reformation after four hundred years we must attempt to look at its nature and its character, to see exactly how far we agree with and how far we have wandered away from the faith and action of our fathers.⁶

Reid concluded with this challenge:

We in our day and age with much greater means of communication and much greater readiness perhaps to hear the Gospel have many advantages not enjoyed by the reformers. Yet they, going forth in faith, received God's blessing and accomplished much in an amazingly short time. If we too serve, faithful and obedient to His command, we shall see His blessings come upon us. This perhaps is the most important aspect of the Scottish reformers' message to us. The church must be the church, but it can fulfil its obligations and responsibilities only as it holds forth Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord to this day and generation."⁷

Reid was already researching his *magnum opus*, a biography of John Knox. As he said in his second lecture, "Knox helped to bring in the Reformation and helped to make it a part of Scottish life."⁸ "[W]hen he died," he concluded, "he left a church strongly impregnated with his idea, the church which over the past four hundred years has wielded a great influence throughout the English speaking world."⁹

⁶ Reid, *The Scottish Reformation* (Addresses to the Synods of the Maritime Provinces and of Toronto and Kingston, October 1960, observing the 400th Anniversary of the Reformation in Scotland), 31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 28–29.

The death of John Knox in 1572 provided another milestone for Reid to commemorate. In 1965, he moved to the University of Guelph to set up the History Department. During his years as head, he made the department a North American centre for Scottish studies. As for the Knox biography, he had to forego a research sabbatical due to a colleague's incompetence; eventually, however, the book was published by Scribner's in 1975 to mixed reviews.

Lessons from a "Trumpeter of God"

The final chapter of *Trumpeter of God*, titled "John Knox after Four Hundred Years," got Reid into trouble. Some reviewers regarded the chapter as beyond the boundaries of academic research and scholarly integrity. Reid summarized the long-term impact of John Knox and what his legacy means for the Church today. He cited the fundamental lesson of John Knox's life and the contribution Knox had made as a "trumpeter of God," a leader in a time of social and political upheaval. Reid, both in the title of the book and in his application of the lessons of Knox's life, stated that Knox had brought about "the restoration of the church," something he devoutly hoped for and prayed would happen in Canada and in the Presbyterian Church.

Knox was the kind of leader the Church needs today, Reid went on to say. "Knox has done much to set the tone for Scotland and the Scot since the Sixteenth Century." Personally, Reid took great encouragement from the Scottish Reformation. The General Assembly of August 1560 he described as the turning point in the Scottish Reformation.

Knox's constant blowing of the Master's trumpet had had an effect in bringing into existence a Reformed Church despite aristocratic lukewarmness and opposition. The rest of his life would be devoted to maintaining, extending and defending the work established.¹⁰

Defence of Reformation theology, Reid affirmed, was needed as never before. In this, Knox was an example of what was called for. It was not an easy position to maintain in a mainline church and, like Knox, Reid had critics from both sides: those who said he went too far and others who berated him for not going far enough.

One of the latter group was A. A. Murray, a stormy petrel who in 1934 had been called to the largest congregation in Cape Breton Presbytery in Sydney, but lasted less than a year before he resigned, founding an independent Presbyterian congregation in the city. Surprisingly Murray remained in the PCC until 1948, when he resigned because of the PCC's support for the Church of Christ in China, among other matters. Murray looked to Reid for support of his separatist extremism but received none.

"I had looked to you to stand like Luther and Calvin against every form of false teaching in our church, but I have been sadly disappointed," he wrote in a scorching letter at the time of his resignation. "If you keep [your] mouth shut and go along with the 'machine' you may get a big church and possibly a professorship, but if you come out boldly in the courts of the church you will have to bear the reproach of Christ."¹¹

Murray's outburst should be placed alongside comments by Ritchie Bell, professor and acting principal of Presbyterian College (from 1970 to 1973). Bell, speaking for the Presbytery of Montreal, told of "the unbounded gratitude of the Court for your energetic and conscientious leadership . . . when things were at a low ebb within the

¹⁰ W. Stanford Reid, *Trumpeter of God: A Biography of John Knox* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 221.

¹¹ A. A. Murray to W. Stanford Reid, 6 October 1948, WSR Archive, University of Guelph.

Presbytery, you fired the enthusiasm of the Court to launch out and undertake new ventures.”¹² Not everyone agreed with Bell’s assessment of Reid, however. As a maverick critic in a mainline denomination, Reid was isolated and often misunderstood.

Defending the Reformation in an Unexpected Place

Towards the end of his active life Stanford Reid engaged in one final defence of the Reformation as he saw it. The scene of this conflict was startling and unpredictable: Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, a supposed bastion of Reformation orthodoxy founded by J. Gresham Machen in 1929, from which Reid had graduated in 1938, and where he had been an active trustee since 1946.

At the beginning of 1977, Reid took a sabbatical at the seminary as a visiting professor of church history. His wife, Priscilla, attended a Student Wives’ evening where the professor of Systematic Theology, Norman Shepherd, was addressing the wives, saying, “when his baby was baptized she became a Christian.” Reid would recount the incident later in a letter: “[Shepherd] was rather rude when she [Priscilla] maintained that to become a Christian meant the work of the Holy Spirit, not just the performance of an outward rite, and Norman got a round of applause from some students who were present.”

Shepherd maintained that Christians were saved by the *work* of obedient faith. Reid heard alarm bells going off and for the next six years engaged in an emotional and personally costly struggle to maintain his seminary’s Reformation faith. For Reid, Calvin’s doctrine of justification by faith was pivotal to the reformer’s whole system of doctrine. In a 1980 *Westminster Theological Journal* article, Reid quoted Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*:

God deigns to receive the sinner with his free goodness, but finds nothing worthy in the sinner. He, therefore, must find the reason for his move towards the sinner within himself, and so of his own goodness touches the sinner who responds by despairing of his own righteousness, and placing his dependence on the mercy of God alone.¹³

Reid saw Reformation truth at stake. In a 1981 letter to the chairman of the WTS faculty (many of whom defended Shepherd), he wrote of Shepherd’s views: “his position on the doctrine of justification is very close to that of the seventeenth century Neonomians, if not to the Council of Trent.”¹⁴ Six months later, Shepherd was dismissed from his teaching position by the WTS Board of Trustees. Reid felt he had struck a blow on behalf of Reformation truth and justification by faith alone, Luther’s great summons to biblical faith.

It was a pyrrhic victory: the controversy had taken a heavy toll on Reid. He left the Board of Trustees.

What Heirs to the Reformation Ought to Do

Only his post-retirement teaching responsibilities in Melbourne, Australia, where for the first time in his teaching career he instructed seminary students — something he had been denied by his own denomination 30 years earlier — gave Reid hope for a new

¹² Reid, *An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy*, 147.

¹³ Citing Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.11.16. W. Stanford Reid, “Justification by Faith According to John Calvin,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 42, no. 2 (1980): 306.

¹⁴ W. Stanford Reid to Raymond Dillard, 22 June 1981, Shepherd Archive, Westminster Theological Seminary.

post-Union Presbyterian Church in Australia that was grounded in Reformation truth. His instruction shaped future ministries and provided theological cohesion Down Under for the regrouped denomination.

After four years of travel and temporary housing, he gave up his interim position. He returned to Guelph, wintering in Florida. But buffeted by cancer and coping with his wife's deteriorating health, he died at the end of 1996. His wife, blind, with Parkinson's disease, and mentally clouded, followed him six months later.

Thirty years earlier, in an article titled "The Power of the Reformation Today," Reid had thrown down the gauntlet for those whose faith had been shaped by the Reformation: "Their calling," he affirmed,

is to launch out from the Reformers' basic principles in obedience to the Spirit and under the guidance of the Scriptures, to make known the "unsearchable riches of Christ," even in this atomic age. This does not mean that they should reject or even neglect the teaching of the Reformers, but taking their basic doctrine they should apply them in a Twentieth Century context. This is the work committed to their hands by the sovereign God. At the same time, they must continually realize that all their talk, all their thinking, all their anxiety, can accomplish little in and by itself. Only as the Spirit of God sovereignly employs their work and effort will they achieve anything.¹⁵

¹⁵ "The Power of the Reformation Today," *International Reformed Bulletin*, no. 22 (July 1965): 49.

Rt. Rev. Bishop Cridge and Presbyterian College: Honouring Reformation Convictions

John Vaudry

In 1895, Presbyterian College, Montreal conferred the degree of doctor of divinity *honoris causa* on the “Rt. Rev. Bishop Cridge” of Victoria, British Columbia.¹ Cridge’s name stands out in the list of early recipients of that degree because unlike the majority of DD recipients in our colleges, he was not a Presbyterian. He was, in fact, an Anglican. Why, then, was a bishop given such an honour by so non-episcopal an institution as Presbyterian College? To answer that question, we must look at Cridge and his career.

Bishop Cridge was a key player in the life of Victoria and of British Columbia. The province’s landscape bears witness to his influence. Mount Cridge, Cridge Passage, Cridge Island, and Cridge Creek are all named after him, and he is considered a “Founding Father” of Victoria.² The Cridge Centre for the Family, western Canada’s oldest registered non-profit society, continues the work he and his wife began: the Protestant Orphans’ Home. (Today, it serves food to the needy, aids single parents, and provides low-cost housing for some 40 immigrant families.)³

Cridge’s Early Life in England

Edward Cridge was born on 17 December 1817 at Bratton Fleming, Devonshire, England. He was raised by his schoolmaster father after his mother died when he was only a child. Cridge was educated at nearby grammar schools, and in 1837 at the age of 19 he was given a position as third master of Oundle grammar school in Northampton.

Six years later, Cridge entered St. Peter’s College, Cambridge, from which he graduated with a bachelor of arts degree at age 31. While at Cambridge in the 1840s, the gifted Cridge played the cello and helped form the Cambridge University Musical Society.⁴

After passing his theological examinations, Cridge was ordained a deacon (1848) and then a presbyter (1849). He served curacies in Norfolk and Essex. He also became the first vicar of Christ Church, Stratford March, West Ham (now part of east London), serving three years.

However, the dedicated, hard-working Cridge found his health suffering. Feeling that a change might help, he applied for the vacant chaplaincy of the Hudson’s Bay Company at Fort Victoria. He was accepted in September 1854.

Shortly before embarking for British Columbia on the *Marquis of Bute*, Cridge married Mary Winmill, a devout Evangelical who had been a member of his parish in West Ham. This was the beginning of a lengthy and fruitful partnership. After a six-

¹ This is how his name is given in the list of DD recipients printed in the Presbyterian College calendar of 1897–98.

² Jack Krayenhoff, “Founding Fathers of Victoria: Bishop Edward Cridge,” *James Bay Beacon*, March 2014.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ian Macdonald and Betty O’Keefe, *Quiet Reformers: The Legacy of Early Victoria’s Bishop Edward and Mary Cridge* (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2010), chap. 1. Edgar Fawcett, in “Reminiscences of Bishop Cridge,” an undated manuscript at Victoria Public Library, says that among the seven founders of the Musical Society were William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) and John B. Dykes, a composer of many well-known hymn tunes.

month voyage, the Cridges arrived in Fort Victoria and took up their work in rooms provided by James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company. A chapel was built in 1856 and given the name Christ Church.

Fort Victoria and Gold Rush Challenges

Cridge soon became a prominent member of the community, gaining the respect and affection of many associated with the Hudson's Bay Company. His simple, Bible-based preaching touched a chord with many people, and his authentic Christian character was widely revered. Governor Douglas appointed him superintendent of Education, an unpaid post he held from 1856 to 1865. For many years, Douglas and Cridge worked closely together. They shared many of the same values; for example, both men were open and gracious in their relations with members of various ethnic and racial groups and discouraged racial discrimination. (Douglas came from a mixed-race marriage, his mother being Creole, and he, in turn, married an Aboriginal woman.⁵)

A major challenge facing Cridge was the Fraser River gold rush, which by late 1858 had brought tens of thousands of people to Victoria en route to seeking their fortunes. Saloons sprang up, miners and gamblers poured in, and needs multiplied. Cridge sought to aid the poor and downtrodden, but the work was too much for one man. He appealed to the Colonial Church and School Society in London, hoping to be sent two or three more priests, and soon the Reverend W. B. Crickmer arrived to share the work.

The needs of British Columbia also came to the attention of Angela Burdett-Coutts, a wealthy philanthropist, who decided to donate £25,000 to support a bishop and two archdeacons.⁶ In 1860, George Hills, a moderate High Churchman, whose successful ministry in Portsmouth had impressed Coutts, was sent out as first bishop of the British Columbia diocese. The son of a naval officer, he tended to be aloof and stiff in manner; he did not mix well with people of the colony, whom he viewed as social inferiors. He saw his mission as civilizing the West Coast and making it another England.

The Controversy over Ritualism

At first, the two clergymen got on well, with Bishop Hills appointing Cridge as dean of Christ Church in 1860. During this period Hills wrote that he was "very fortunate in Mr. Cridge, the original clergyman here. He is a truly good man, a sincere and devout Christian. He enters fully into all my plans and is a great support to me."⁷

This happy relationship⁸ deteriorated, however, and came to an end in 1872 in what historian Frank A. Peake called "the local expression of tensions which were being felt throughout the Anglican Communion."⁹

Peake is referring to the theological conflict arising from the Oxford Movement (Tractarianism) and particularly the controversy over "ritualism" that came to the fore after John Henry Newman's conversion to Rome in 1845 — the so-called "second generation" of the Oxford Movement. The first generation, as represented by, for example, Edward Bouverie Pusey, had little interest in liturgical change; their interest

⁵ Macdonald and O'Keefe, *Quiet Reformers*, chaps. 2–6. Cridge once stated that skin colour was an "affair of supreme insignificance before the Almighty" (p. 63).

⁶ Robert Dennison, "Cridge: The Making of a Bishop," *British Columbia History* 40, no. 3 (2007): 5.

⁷ Macdonald and O'Keefe, *Quiet Reformers*, 81.

⁸ The bishop even acted as godfather at the baptism of one of the Cridges' daughters. She was christened "Mary Hills Cridge," a symbol of co-operation between Cridge and the bishop. Dennison, 5.

⁹ Frank A. Peake, *The Anglican Church in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), 77.

was doctrinal. From the 1850s on, there took place a shift that involved the adoption of “catholic” liturgical practices: these included the use of Eucharistic vestments (chasuble, alb, stole, and maniple), the use of bells at the elevation of the host, the use of incense, lights (lighted candles, especially six on the high altar), the use of wafer bread, the eastward position, the making of the sign of the cross, and the mixing of sacramental wine with water. These practices were opposed by many in the Church of England (not just Evangelicals). There were even several famous cases of ritualists being prosecuted because of these innovations.

A Fateful Sermon

At the opening of a new cathedral, Archdeacon William Reece of Vancouver preached a sermon allegedly advocating a form of ritualism.¹⁰ The local newspaper described this sermon as “indiscreet and in bad taste.”¹¹ Most of the congregation were Evangelicals and, as the paper put it, listened with “ill-concealed impatience.”¹² Just before the close of the service, Dean Cridge, feeling he could not remain silent while such teaching was expounded from his pulpit, rose and, much to the embarrassment of Bishop Hills and the visiting bishop of Oregon, declared in a voice trembling with emotion,

My dearly beloved friends, it is with great shame and humility that as a matter of conscience I feel it is my duty to say a few words to you before we part. As your pastor, after what we have just heard I feel it is my duty to raise my voice in protest against it. During the 17 years that I have officiated as your pastor in this spot, this is the first time ritualism has been preached here, and I pray Almighty God it may be the last. So far as I can prevent it, it shall be the last.¹³

Contemporary assessments of Cridge’s action that day vary considerably. Some people believed it to be inexcusable, and others saw it, as *The Daily Colonist* put it, as “a manly stand” and “a noble act of heroism.”¹⁴

“Two Stubborn Men”

What followed was a lengthy newspaper correspondence¹⁵ between “two stubborn men” — Cridge and Hills. Bishop Hills felt constrained to censure Cridge for causing a “public scandal attacking him in the House of God.”¹⁶ Cridge refused to apologize and rejected the censure. Peake describes his attitude as “inflexible obstinacy.”¹⁷

¹⁰ Macdonald and O’Keefe, *Quiet Reformers*, 127, claim that “he advocated the adoption of ritualism in its most radical form.” Peake, *The Anglican Church*, 79, maintains that “[t]he sermon seems to have been a moderate commendation of the new life which the Catholic Revival had brought to the Church, and a suggestion that reverence and devotion were deepened and increased by a degree of formality and ceremonial in the services of the Church.” Peake is not particularly sympathetic to Cridge.

¹¹ *The Daily Colonist*, quoted in Jean Friesen, “Hills, George,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (Toronto: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003).
http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hills_george_12E.html.

¹² *The Daily Colonist*, 6 December 1872.

¹³ I can no longer find the source of this wording, but it is close to that in *The Daily Colonist*, 6 December 1872.

¹⁴ 11 May 1913. In “Reminiscences,” Fawcett claims that Reece’s involvement in some sort of scandal ought to have been known. He argues that Bishop Hills must have been aware of Reece’s views and of the likelihood that his preaching could provoke controversy. He writes of “obnoxious doctrines advocated by a bad man.”

¹⁵ Meeting to discuss the matter was “alien to the etiquette of the day.” Peake, *The Anglican Church*, 80.

¹⁶ Macdonald and O’Keefe, *Quiet Reformers*, 131.

¹⁷ Peake, *The Anglican Church*, 85. It should not be thought that Cridge was ordinarily a “difficult” man. The

After a year of debate (largely on the bishop's desire to form a Synod in which he would have a veto), Cridge continued to defy the bishop's authority by defending a polity that was virtually congregationalist.¹⁸ In the summer of 1874, Cridge then denied the bishop the right of visitation to the cathedral. As a result, Cridge was summoned to appear in ecclesiastical court to face charges of insubordination and contumacy.

Dean Cridge admitted he had made some mistakes, but he also declared he felt that the trial was illegal and irregular. After four days of listening to dry legal arguments, he abruptly withdrew from the court, leaving those present stunned. He was found guilty of most of the charges, and the bishop revoked his licence as a minister of the Church of England. Ian Macdonald and Betty O'Keefe comment, "He [Cridge] was stoic, but this schism in the Church to which he had devoted much of his life was a major heartbreak."¹⁹

Dean Cridge continued to minister at Christ Church Cathedral almost as if nothing had happened, but the bishop applied for a legal injunction to have Cridge removed from the building. In a judgment of seven pages of fine print, Chief Justice Sir Matthew Begbie maintained that Cridge broke not only Canon 53 of the Church of England (which forbade a minister from criticizing another clergyman publicly) but also overstepped the bounds of "social etiquette and propriety" as well as "Christian Charity." In the Chief Justice's opinion, Cridge ought to have issued an apology. He also wrote that the bishop might have simply given a rebuke and let it go.²⁰ However, Begbie ruled in favour of the bishop and forbade Cridge from entering the cathedral.²¹

In their sympathetic biography of Edward and Mary Cridge, *Quiet Reformers*, Macdonald and O'Keefe state that "[t]echnically, Bishop Hills had won, but his authority and prestige had suffered another very public and damaging setback from which he never fully recovered."²²

This unfortunate affair was part personality conflict, part power struggle, and part clash of ecclesiologies. The result was that Cridge seceded from the Church of England and, as often happens at such times, many of his parishioners went with him. Like the Presbyterians of the Disruption they walked away from their building to venture into the unknown. Of course, some, like High Churchman H. P. Wright, deplored Cridge's action. "Schism did its desolating work," he wrote, "and one who, by his moral life and kind heart had long been universally respected and admired fell into its snare; so that he, who began his career an honoured clergyman of our primitive and apostolic branch of Christ's Church, is now cut off from her communion . . ."²³

minister who preached at his funeral said of him, "his sweetness, meekness and nearness to God was always the same, calm and unruffled." *The Daily Colonist*, 18 May 1913. Macdonald and O'Keefe, *Quiet Reformers*, 126, state that he "was by nature a quiet, non-confrontational man." Near the close of his life, the dean of Christ Church Cathedral visited Cridge and asked for his blessing. He was also visited by two Anglican bishops, twice by the Roman Catholic bishop, and by two nuns, one of whom remarked after his death, "You could read in his face his Holy life, and his very speech was permeated with the Gospel." Fawcett, "Reminiscences," 18. Emily Carr, the celebrated artist and writer, a childhood friend of his daughters, shares some delightful memories of Cridge. She recalls him being "gentle" and "mild." *The Book of Small* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004) [originally published by Oxford University Press, 1942], 41.

¹⁸ Cridge maintained that "every congregation with an accepted parson was a complete church." Macdonald and O'Keefe, *Quiet Reformers*, 132. Conflict over the extent of episcopal authority was a major bone of contention between Tractarians and Evangelicals in the mid-Victorian era.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁰ Judgment: Bishop of Columbia versus Rev. Mr. Cridge, 1874, McGill Library, FC19C36, no. 14360.

²¹ In spite of all this, the judge later wrote a cheque for \$1,200 to cover the dean's legal expenses! The cheque was never cashed since public subscription had already raised the sufficient sum of \$1,500.

²² *Ibid.*, 139.

²³ Quoted in Donald H. Simpson, "Henry Press Wright: First Archdeacon of Columbia," *British Columbia*

One wonders what the people of Christ Church Cathedral were thinking when they left virtually *en masse* with Cridge. It is quite likely that in Canada, as in Britain, Protestantism was viewed as a bulwark of English liberties, while Catholicism was identified with Spain, France, and Ireland, countries thought to be under the thumb of the papacy. Ritualism was viewed as a Rome-ward movement. Thus, deep-seated cultural prejudices may have been at work among the citizens of Victoria. Another factor, pointed out by Alan L. Hayes, is that the dispute between Cridge and Hills was also “an argument between the Hudson’s Bay chaplain in a company town and an outsider recently arrived from the mother country.”²⁴ Of course, the people’s behaviour may have been due, at least in part — perhaps a significant part — to evangelical convictions instilled in them by Cridge, their respected and much-loved pastor.

The Church of Our Lord and a New Affiliation

At first, the new congregation leased the Presbyterian Church on Pandora Street, but Sir James Douglas donated land for a new church on Humboldt Street, and the “Carpenter Gothic” structure — known as the Church of Our Lord (now a National Historic Site) — was dedicated in January 1876. Bishop Hills confidently predicted that within three years Cridge would be left without any followers.²⁵ However, the congregation (now affiliated with the Anglican Network in Canada) is still going strong.

Cridge lost little time affiliating his church with a body more in keeping with his theology and churchmanship — the Reformed Episcopal Church. This church was founded in 1874 following the secession of George David Cummins from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States over the issue of ritualism. Cummins had been assistant bishop of Kentucky and now became the bishop of the new denomination.²⁶

The Reformed Episcopal Church began in reaction to the Oxford Movement which sought to revive “catholic” doctrine and worship in the Church of England. Starting with John Keble’s famous Assize sermon on National Apostasy, the Oxford Movement gained popularity in Britain and spread to North America. It appealed to the authority of the Church Fathers and tended to distance itself from the English reformers, such as Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Jewel. Prominent among its tenets were Apostolic succession, or the belief that valid “orders” for ministers are derived only from bishops who stand in an unbroken line extending back to the Apostles; the Real Presence, the doctrine that the body and blood of Christ are objectively present in the bread and wine of Communion; and the Eucharistic sacrifice, the notion that the Lord’s Supper is offered up to God as in some sense a repetition of Calvary. Some of the Tractarians (John Henry Newman being the best known) eventually joined the Roman communion, but many remained in the Anglican Church as Anglo-Catholics, with a few of them advocating an advanced ritualism barely distinguishable from the Roman rite.

The Reformed Episcopal Church was “low” Anglican.²⁷ It adopted a *Book of Common Prayer* revision that expunged expressions thought to be unbiblical; it chose a simple worship form: no crosses or candles on the Communion table; no Eucharistic vestments, wafer bread, copes, and mitres; no processions; no facing east for the Creed.

Historical Quarterly 19, nos. 3–4 (July–October 1955): 169.

²⁴ Alan L. Hayes, epilogue in *Anglicans in Canada: Controversies and Identity in Historical Perspective* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

²⁵ *The Daily Colonist*, 11 May 1913.

²⁶ See Allen C. Guelzo, *For the Union of Evangelical Christendom: The Irony of the Reformed Episcopalians* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1994).

²⁷ *The Canadian Encyclopedia* describes Cridge as “an extreme Evangelical.”

In Canada, the Reformed Episcopal Church had a few parishes, scattered from New Brunswick to Ontario, including one in Montréal and one in Ottawa. Now, with Cridge's break with the Church of England, there was also one lonely parish on the West Coast.

In 1875, Cridge was elected missionary bishop at the Reformed Episcopal General Council in Chicago with jurisdiction from San Francisco to Alaska.²⁸ He was consecrated bishop in Ottawa in July 1876 and asked to represent his Church at a meeting of the Free Church of England, a sister denomination, that same year.

An Honorary Degree from Presbyterian College, Montreal

Although Victoria was at the time the capital of the sixth province of Canada, it was still a small community, relatively isolated from the rest of the country. Nevertheless, word of the Cridge–Hills controversy reached other parts of the nation, and somehow came to the attention of the authorities at Presbyterian College in Montréal, a city where the Protestant minority often felt beleaguered by the Roman Catholic majority. Presbyterian College was founded in 1865 to equip ministers (both English and French speaking) to defend the teachings of the Reformation and evangelize the largely francophone province. The faculty was committed to maintaining a Protestant witness in Québec and extending the Christian cause through overseas missions. These were the days of former priest Charles Chiniquy, and the college was part of a network that included the French Canadian Missionary Society, the Institut at Pointe-aux-Trembles at the east end of the Island of Montréal, and a number of small French-speaking congregations — all aimed at the conversion of Roman Catholics.²⁹ At the college's helm was Principal Donald H. MacVicar, a strong evangelical Calvinist.

One can easily believe that the Cridge–Hills affair would not have escaped the notice of MacVicar, whose sympathies would undoubtedly have been on the side of Edward Cridge.³⁰ Apart from a few points of ecclesiastical polity the two men were kindred spirits in many ways.³¹

Some twenty years after Cridge formed the Church of Our Lord, Presbyterian College decided to award him a doctor of divinity degree, *honoris causa*. The *Victoria Daily Colonist* called this “a noteworthy event in Victoria Church History.”³²

It is remarkable that Presbyterian College chose to honour a man of a different denomination: a man who was considered the cause of what Peake calls a “schism”³³ (even if it took the cautious Scots in Montréal 20 years to take that significant step). One wonders whether there was any fear of offending the Church of England in Canada by bestowing honour on someone who had left that body; at the time, though, the

²⁸ *The Daily Colonist*, 11 May 1913.

²⁹ In today's ecumenical climate it may be forgotten that in 19th century Canada, Protestant–Roman Catholic polemics were quite common. For example, the Reverend William MacLaren of Knox Church, Ottawa (later principal of Knox College), published a lecture titled “The Romish Doctrine of the Rule of Faith Examined” in 1872. It is the only contribution I have come across by MacLaren on the Roman controversy. Interestingly it was delivered at the close of the session of the Presbyterian College, Montreal on 4 April of that year.

³⁰ I have not been able to find any evidence that MacVicar and Cridge knew each other. It is not clear exactly how the Montréal college came to the decision to award Cridge the honorary degree. Was it on the recommendation of Presbyterians in Victoria? To the best of my knowledge, there is no archival material extant that would shed light on this question.

³¹ In West Ham, some of Cridge's parishioners objected to the Calvinistic note in his preaching. Macdonald and O'Keefe, *Quiet Reformers*, 8.

³² 25 April 1895.

³³ Peake, *The Anglican Church*, 85.

leaders of Montréal Anglicanism (some of them probably MacVicar's friends) were Evangelicals, including the Primate of All Canada, William Bennett Bond. One suspects, however, that the authorities at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria were not pleased with the local Presbyterians for co-operating with the college in this matter.

The reason for granting the degree was clear. Although Cridge had many achievements as pastor, educator, and community leader, this degree was given primarily to acknowledge his services in the cause of Protestantism. For both Cridge and MacVicar, the Oxford Movement, with its Romanizing beliefs and practices, was a menace. Its doctrines (symbolized in its liturgy) appeared to repudiate the Reformation and obscure the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ — something precious to both leaders. Anglo-Catholicism was much too like Roman Catholicism in the opinion of Québec Protestants to be anything other than a threat. So, it seems that the college was honouring Cridge's Reformed convictions and his willingness to take a costly stand for the sake of conscience.

Several questions arise. Was the college also declaring its approval of "schism"? Or, was Cridge's separation from the Church of England not viewed as a true schism? Was there an implied judgment on the Anglican Church?

The degree was conferred on Cridge at a special convocation held in St. Andrew's Church, Victoria, on 24 April 1895 — replete with solos from Handel's *Messiah* and the presence of several local clergy. It was presented by the Reverend W. Leslie Clay (later a strong anti-unionist and the moderator of the 1927 General Assembly) acting on behalf of the college. The letter from the college's senate inviting the bishop to receive the degree cited "your scholarly attainments, eminent Christian character, and *long and useful service in the Church of the Protestant Reformation.*"³⁴ Cridge saw this honour as in some sense a stamp of approval from the Presbyterian Church. He stated:

No degree that I might have obtained in the usual perfunctory manner could have been like this — emanating as it does from a body ever foremost, now and for ages past, in contending for the "faith once delivered to the saints." Its approval means much. I accept it, as recognizing also (though not now for the first time) myself and the body which I represent as belonging to the great church of the Protestant Reformation . . . I shall take these insignia [the red hood] and shall wear them and glory in them as most precious tokens of the honour which has befallen my gray hairs.³⁵

Bishop Cridge also interpreted Presbyterian College's act as presaging greater manifestations of Christian unity:

I think I see in this spontaneous merging of denominational distinctions in one grand conception of a common faith, a sign of the times . . . the church is flowing together and being enlarged. The desire of unity is universal. The way in which it may be brought about is the one engrossing question.³⁶

Cridge took the opportunity to criticize a common Anglican approach to unity: the invitation to come together on the basis of the "historic episcopate." This, he declared, was both ineffective in creating or maintaining unity and unscriptural. Citing the meaning of the Greek word *episcopé* he said of High Church pretensions, "A throne is

³⁴ This quote comes from the letter sent by John Campbell, registrar, on behalf of the college inviting Cridge to receive the degree [emphasis mine]. The letter is now in the BC Archives, MS-0320, box 4, file 1 (on microfilm A01979). See also *The Daily Colonist*, 25 April 1895.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

an incongruous appendage to the office of overseer.”³⁷ He went on to say that the Evangelical Alliance was already an impressive model for the visible unity of the Reformed Church. The Anglicans, he said, should learn from other Protestants.³⁸

Conclusion

In today’s ecumenical climate, the idea of a mainline denomination honouring a minister of a breakaway evangelical group would be unthinkable. As well, the issues that surfaced in the Cridge–Hills debate would be practically unintelligible to most people. Canadian Presbyterians have changed much since 1895, and our ecumenism moves in other directions. It is hard to imagine a time when Presbyterians engaged in polemics against either Roman Catholics or Anglo-Catholics. Among other things, we share buildings, hold inter-church services, and co-operate in theological education. Roman bishops sometimes even preach from Presbyterian pulpits. Someone like MacVicar would find the ecclesiastical landscape unrecognizable.

Ironically, the Reformed Episcopal Church has also changed from its early days. It is still conservative in theology, but Bishops Cummins and Cridge would be disconcerted by much of what has happened to the Church they founded. Like most Anglicans, many Reformed Episcopalians have “levelled up” by adding the very vestments, stoles, croziers, and other items the founders scorned. Presbyterians, too, have moved away from their strong Protestant convictions about evangelical doctrine and simplicity in worship.

Today, the tragic division between Bishop George Hills and Cridge is practically forgotten, but the legacy of Edward Cridge, DD, continues to be celebrated by evangelical Christians who admire the man’s faith, courage, and compassion.

Despite being a controversial figure at one time in his life, Bishop Cridge was a sturdy pioneer, a founder of Victoria, and a “venerable” leader in the church and community. He died, almost blind and suffering from asthma, in 1913 at age 95.³⁹ His last conscious words were “I was determined, determined — as a young man — to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”⁴⁰

Perhaps one of the local Presbyterian ministers present on 24 April 1895 was right: Presbyterian College, Montreal — “one of the most reputable in the land” — had “honoured itself” by the accolades it bestowed on the “Rt. Rev. Bishop Cridge.”⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Two members of the Ministerial Association acted as pallbearers at the funeral, and the Reverend Dr. W. Leslie Clay of St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Victoria, read a passage from Thessalonians.

⁴⁰ Quoted by Fawcett, “Reminiscences,” 46.

⁴¹ *The Daily Colonist*, 16 March 1895. Dr. Campbell was presumably referring to the decision to grant the degree; it was not actually conferred until 24 April of that year.

Protocol and Property: Church Union Issues in Salt Springs, Nova Scotia*

John Cameron

In 1925, the *United Church of Canada Act* came into effect. The new Protestant denomination was founded on the joining together of Methodist, Congregationalist, and some Presbyterian churches; however, in Salt Springs, Nova Scotia, determining whether St. Luke's Presbyterian Church was to be one of those churches was problematic. There were three unique aspects to the situation there: (1) church union was not settled until 1929; (2) the key decisions were made not by church courts, but by civil courts; and (3) these courts included both Canadian courts in Halifax and Ottawa, and a United Kingdom court — the Privy Council. The issues in Salt Springs involved both the congregation's process of decision making and church property.

St. Luke's Presbyterian Church and Union

First, let us look at the historical context. In 1822, a congregation of the Church of Scotland was established in Salt Springs.¹ A few years later a church building was erected, and the name "St. Luke's" chosen. By 1880, another larger structure stood on the site. This building, which remains in use today, was the one in dispute at time of church union in 1925.²

In 1845, some 20 families left St. Luke's for the Free Church tradition. Being denied use of St. Luke's, they erected a new building and called it "Ebenezer." In 1875, both the St. Luke's and Ebenezer congregations stayed out of the newly formed Presbyterian Church in Canada; in 1908, however, the two congregations joined as one within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The congregation gathered and worshipped at the St. Luke's building.

Within Canada there was a movement towards a broader church union. Initially, events unfolded in Salt Springs much as they did elsewhere. In 1912, a vote showed a majority of 17 in favour of union. That changed in 1915, with a vote showing a majority of 25 against union, and in 1924, with a vote showing a majority of 14 against union.³ However, another vote — one taken in July 1925 — was unanimously in support of union.

Court action followed. At the first level, the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia ruled in favour of the unionists. In 1927, the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, the entire bench sitting, reversed the Chief Justice's decision. In 1929, the decision of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada and later by the Privy Council in London, United Kingdom. These decisions determined whether the St. Luke's

* This paper is based on my bachelor of divinity thesis, *Church Union in Pictou Presbytery*, a copy of which is on file at Presbyterian College, Montreal. When Rev. Dr. James Farris read my thesis, he reported he had not known about the Salt Springs situation. He thought that more people should know about it. Hence my letter to Don MacLeod, and here we are.

¹ M. Allen Gibson, *Churches by the Sea*, *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 3 February 1962.

² About 100 metres away stands St. Luke's United Church, erected in 1929.

³ There is some variation in vote numbers. *Acts and Proceedings, 1925*, page 18 of the appendix, reports a majority of 23 against union (87 against, 64 for). The figure of 14 is derived from the *[Toronto] Globe*, 13 January 1925.

congregation would join the newly formed United Church of Canada or be an integral part of the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada. They also determined property matters.

The Rationale for a Second Vote

This prolonged period of conflict and uncertainty resulted from significant differences between the federal legislation on church union and related legislation in Nova Scotia.

The vote of the congregation held on 22 December 1924 was conducted under the authority of the federal Act of Parliament. The *United Church of Canada Act* provided that, at any time between 10 December 1924 and 10 June 1925, the day when the Act came into force,⁴ any congregation of the negotiating churches — Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist — might, at a meeting, “regularly called,” decide against entering the union.

The vote of the congregation held on 27 July 1925 was conducted under a provincial Act of Nova Scotia, which provided originally that voting on church union in congregations within the province should take place during the six months *after* 10 June 1925, rather than in the six months before. It also provided that a congregation which decided against entering the union might later choose to do so. The provisions of the federal Act were to prevail except where provincial legislation had been enacted before the passing of the federal bill. On 7 May 1925, an amendment to the provincial legislation appeared to have removed this conflict. It provided that congregational voting conducted under the provisions of the federal Act would be taken as fulfilling the conditions of the provincial Act. The actual wording was as follows:

Any vote on the question of entering the said union taken in a congregation prior to the coming into force in pursuance of and in accordance with the provisions of the Act of Incorporation shall be deemed to be the vote of such congregation for the purposes of this Act.⁵

Despite this clear wording, the provincial Act still included a condition on the taking of a second vote.⁶ Thus, the Act as passed by the Nova Scotia legislature stated congregations that voted not to enter union might at a later congregational meeting, “regularly called,” decide to do so. The federal legislation included no such provision.

Relying on the provincial provision for a second vote (and noting that the majority against union had been small), the unionists of St. Luke’s desired to hold a second vote. They hoped to reverse the original decision. So, elders of the congregation — all of whom favoured union — prepared a notice calling a meeting of the congregation.

Dr. Robert Johnston, the interim-moderator, prevented this notice from being read from the pulpit. He had not been consulted and the Session had not met to authorize the calling of the meeting. Nonetheless, the notice was read “from the choir stalls, on two Sabbaths, by Union partisans, one occasion by a minister, and on another by an elder, and

⁴ Canada, *United Church of Canada Act*, 1924, Chapter 100, section 10.

⁵ Nova Scotia, *An Act to Amend Chapter 122, Acts of 1924, entitled Act Respecting the Union of Certain Churches therein named*, 1925, Chapter 167, section 8(d).

⁶ The anti-unionists had never been happy about the second vote provision, claiming that if a congregation voting against union could reconsider, then congregations entering union should have the same privilege or opportunity. To the best of this writer’s knowledge, such a provision was not included in any of the relevant legislation.

a meeting, in terms of the notice” was held on 27 July 1925.⁷ The vote of this meeting was unanimously in favour of union, the reason being that those who opposed union did not attend. The anti-unionists claimed that the meeting had not been properly or “regularly called.” It was on this very point that the later legal action in four different courts was to be based.

Issues before the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia

In the trial that followed before Chief Justice Harris of Nova Scotia, the argument centred on the validity of this second meeting. The Presbyterians claimed that the meeting and all its proceedings were void and of no effect: there had been no preceding meeting of Session to authorize the calling of such a meeting, a step required by the *Book of Forms*, of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The unionist plea was that the *Book of Forms* was not binding. It was not a code of laws, but a useful guide — *only* a guide.

These conflicting claims raise two questions. Who could have called a congregational meeting that would have been recognized and accepted by all parties as being regularly called and legally held? And under federal and provincial statutes, who would have been recognized as competent to conduct such a meeting?

One thing is certain. On 22 December 1924, at a regularly called and conducted congregational meeting, the congregation voted by a small majority not to enter union.

According to the unionists, after 10 June 1925, such a congregation had no connection with or relationship to any denomination or body. They argued that since the Presbyterian Church in Canada had entered the United Church of Canada as a body on 10 June 1925, the Presbyterian Church in Canada no longer existed except as an integral unit of the new denomination. St. Luke’s was, therefore, an orphan without ministerial leadership. The Reverend S. C. Walls had resigned after the first vote, and Dr. Robert Johnston, interim-moderator since that time, ceased to have any jurisdiction as of 10 June 1925 because the Presbytery of Pictou which had appointed him was now a part of the United Church of Canada. Furthermore, after 10 June 1925, according to the unionists, no other body had been competent to either appoint or reappoint him to that office in the Salt Springs congregation. This point of view indicated that neither Johnston nor the St. Luke’s congregation came under the jurisdiction or discipline of the Presbytery of Pictou or of any other body.

The unionist viewpoint came with further implications. As of 27 July 1925, when the second vote was held and during the weeks when the notices were read, Dr. Johnston had no authority in St. Luke’s and the congregation was not bound to any rules of procedure, such as the *Book of Forms*, except such rules as it should adopt for itself by agreement of its members. From this, then, it could be argued with some justification that the meeting and vote of 27 July were valid. Had the St. Luke’s congregation associated itself with other non-concurring congregations to form a new Presbyterian body and agreed on the *Book of Forms* for its rules of procedure, then it would have been subject to them; however, no such action had been taken. Leaders of the non-concurring congregations had met shortly after 10 June 1925 to reconstitute the Presbytery of Pictou of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The United Church would not recognize this. The Presbyterian Church

⁷ Frank Baird, “Canadian Church Union and the Courts,” *Presbyterian Record* (June 1929): 184.

in Canada could not have both entered union as a Church and at the same time stayed out. That it had gone into union, they were certain.

The New Glasgow *Evening News* of 15 October 1925 described congregations that had voted against union as individual Presbyterian units. If they were to unite with other similar congregations to form a Church, it said, they would forfeit their right under legislation to join the United Church later; instead of taking a vote, they would have to obtain the permission of the courts of their respective bodies. Presbyterians were thus warned to be wary of joining any remnant of the Presbyterian Church in Canada “which seeks to set up a new Church.”⁸

For the Presbyterian non-concurrents, the matter was quite different. As far as they were concerned, the Presbyterian Church in Canada had continued. It was very much alive with a corporate existence of its own, separate and distinct from that of people who had chosen to leave its ranks and membership to join an entirely new ecclesiastical structure and entity, the United Church of Canada. From this point of view the matter was rather simple and straightforward: the St. Luke’s congregation remained a part of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and was, therefore, under the jurisdiction of the reconstituted Presbytery of Pictou with Dr. Robert Johnston as the duly appointed and authorized interim-moderator of the Session. It followed from this that the congregation was still subject to the rules of procedure laid down in the *Book of Forms*, which clearly stated that the only competent authority by which a congregational meeting could be held was a duly constituted meeting of the Session. Since no such meeting of the Session had been either called or convened, then the meeting of 27 July 1925 could not, from this standpoint, have any validity. A group of elders assume the authority of a Session only when they have been duly constituted by either the moderator of the Session or someone properly authorized by the moderator or by Presbytery.

A question of great importance to both parties was how the courts of the land would interpret the church union legislation. Would they recognize the identity of “The Presbyterian Church in Canada” as continuing in that body which continued by that name or would they see the denomination as having been submerged in the United Church of Canada, with the non-concurrents having to establish a new Presbyterian body in Canada?⁹

The 27 July 1925 Meeting and Its Outcome

Now let us look at events and various court actions in greater detail. In July 1925, some 99 members of St. Luke’s signed a petition asking the elders of the congregation to call a congregational meeting for another vote on church union. The notice read:

The undersigned members in full communion of St. Luke’s Presbyterian Congregation at Saltsprings hereby request the elders to call a meeting of the congregation to be held at the earliest time possible under the constitution of the Church for the purpose of considering and voting whether or not the said congregation shall concur in the Union of St. Luke’s Church with the United Church of Canada and become part of the said United Church of Canada.

⁸ The [New Glasgow, N.S.] *Evening News*, 15 October 1925.

⁹ Over time, it was those who did not enter the United Church who gained “official” recognition in the courts as “The Presbyterian Church in Canada.”

The said meeting is to be called under Section 8 of Chapter 122, of the Statutes of Nova Scotia for the year 1924.

Dated at Saltsprings, N.S., this 15th day of July, 1925¹⁰

The elders, acting on this petition, prepared the following notice of meeting and arranged to have it read from the pulpit:

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the congregation shall be held at the Church on the 27th day of July, 1925, at 2 o'clock p.m. for the purpose of considering and voting upon a resolution that St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, Saltsprings, concur in the Union of the Churches provided for by Chapter 122 of the Acts of Nova Scotia for 1924, and that the said St Luke's Presbyterian Church at Saltsprings shall become part of the United Church of Canada. The meeting and the voting thereat shall take place under the provisions of said Section 8 of said Chapter 122 of the Acts of Nova Scotia, 1924.

Dated at Saltsprings, N.S., this 18th day of July, 1925¹¹

On Sunday, 19 July, the student minister, Mr. Harrison, acting undoubtedly on the instructions of Dr. Johnston, the interim-moderator, refused to read the notice. However, during the service an elder, William H. MacKay, read it from the choir.

Then on 26 July there occurred an unusual sequence of events. Dr. Robert Johnston conducted the service himself and refused to read the above notice of meeting. Furthermore, he did not give an opportunity to anyone else to read the notice until after the benediction had been pronounced.

For some reason not explained there was no collection on this Sunday, and consequently there was not the usual break or interval in the service for giving out notices, and the benediction was pronounced before the elder got a chance to read the notice, but it was read by elder R. A. Robertson from the choir stand.¹²

To be technical, this delay meant that the notice had not been read during the service but only after it; therefore, it could be argued that the notice was not valid according to the *Book of Forms*. However, that same afternoon there was another service, this one conducted by the Reverend George Farquhar, at which the notice in question was read. This fine point was to be mentioned in at least one court action, although it was not a major consideration.

As stated earlier, the meeting as announced was held on 27 July and resulted in a unanimous decision in favour of union, those opposing it not being present. The following resolution was adopted:

Resolved that St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, Saltsprings, concur in the Union of Churches provided for by Chapter 122 of the Acts of Nova Scotia for 1924, and that St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, Saltsprings, shall become part of the United Church of Canada.¹³

¹⁰ F. A. Acland, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, *Supreme Court, 1929* (Ottawa, 1930), 474. This excerpt and several others appear in *Trustees of St. Luke's Presbyterian Congregation of Saltsprings v. Cameron*, [1929] S.C.R. 452, at <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/1929/1929canlii79/1929canlii79.html>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Cases of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Reports*, vol. 54 (Toronto: Carswell, 1928), 277.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Immediately after the vote, William H. MacKay, the chairman of the meeting and an elder, declared, “St. Luke’s Presbyterian Church, Saltsprings, is now a part of the United Church of Canada.”¹⁴

Appeal to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, Full Bench

After the meeting the unionists assumed that they had won. They issued a letter written by the Reverend George Farquhar and signed by Clerk of Session Alex C. MacDonald advising the student minister, Mr. E. Harrison, that since the Presbytery of Pictou of the United Church of Canada had been asked to “send supply to the pulpit of St. Luke’s on Sunday next,” he was not to conduct more services there. The United Church people felt that their victory through this vote entitled them to take over the church property, which they did. In the legal actions that followed, Chief Justice Harris of Nova Scotia upheld the decision of 27 July and formally awarded the property to the United Church supporters.¹⁵

An appeal to the full bench of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia by the Presbyterians saw this decision reversed. The meeting of 27 July was declared irregular, its decision null and void, and the property restored to the Presbyterians. One justice supported Chief Justice Harris while three decided against him.

In the courts, attention first centred primarily on the regularity and legality of the 27 July meeting. Other related questions included the status of Dr. Robert Johnston; of the St. Luke’s congregation; of the elders; and of the Pictou Presbytery now that church union had become a reality. The question of the regularity of this second meeting centred on a regulation of the Presbyterian *Book of Forms* that required all congregational meetings to be called by the Session either on its own initiative or at the request of members of the congregation and whether this regulation was still binding upon St. Luke’s.

The elders, or some of them, had met prior to the calling of the meeting of 27 July; however, because Dr. Johnston, the interim-moderator, had not been present Justice Graham declared that this meeting could not be deemed a meeting of the Session and had no significance in terms of Presbyterian Church rules. To be legal, a Session meeting would have required Dr. Johnston to preside. Furthermore, just as it was before union, a meeting of the Session was required to authorize a congregational meeting. In keeping with this and other positions of Justices Rogers and Graham, Justice Carroll agreed.

This understanding differed from the position that Chief Justice Harris had taken, namely, that since 10 June 1925, St. Luke’s had been an independent congregation neither affiliated with nor responsible to any superior body and therefore not bound by the rules of Presbyterian procedure. Thus, a properly constituted Session meeting had not been required. Furthermore, even if a meeting had been held, the outcome would have been the same: the elders had all supported union and had wanted to call a meeting for a second vote. Chief Justice Harris therefore considered that the notice given by the elders was a “good notice for this purpose” because “[u]nder the circumstances, the holding of a meeting of the session would have been a mere formality.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ It was reported that the unionists were so sure that their victory would prevail in any court cases that they spent much money repairing and redecorating the St. Luke’s building. The Presbyterians ultimately benefited from these efforts.

¹⁶ Cases of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia Reports*, vol. 54 (Toronto: Carswell, 1928), 279.

The Chief Justice further contended that because it is not shown that the congregation or church of Salt Springs ever assented to or became in any way subject to or under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Pictou formed by the non-concurring congregations, if such was formed.¹⁷

St. Luke's was in no way subject to this Presbytery and therefore Dr. Johnston's appointment as interim-moderator had no validity.

Justice Mellish stated further that in view of St. Luke's independent status, the Session no longer had any authority over it as it was then constituted. He considered that where congregations had entered the United Church, Sessions continued to function as such but not so in non-concurring congregations. Thus, he wrote: "I cannot come to the conclusion that the vote was bad or ineffective for any reason, and I can see no ground for holding that the congregation, by a vote fairly obtained, did not enter the United Church, even although the formalities incident to Presbyterian discipline were necessarily not complied within obtaining such vote."¹⁸

Over against this, Justice Rogers stated that whether the Presbytery of the non-concurrents was a reality or not had no bearing on the legal situation of St. Luke's. With Justices Graham and Carroll, he supported Dr. Johnston's position as interim-moderator as being valid. Dr. Johnston had been appointed on 5 May 1925. Justice Rogers stated that "[w]hen, therefore, on June 10th, 1925, the Act of Union came into effect, the position of the individual Salt Springs congregation was not affected in any way."¹⁹ ". . . Mr. Johnston's appointment having predated the union remains valid."

Justice Graham stated that even if the Presbytery of Pictou had gone out of existence by joining the United Church, an appointment made by it could not expire with it. He wrote: "His office depended for its existence not upon the continuity of the appointing body, but upon the continuity of the body to which he had been appointed."²⁰

Justice Mellish, in discussing the relationship of St. Luke's to the rules of procedure of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, stated that since many Presbyterian congregations could call congregational meetings without reference to Session because of provisions of local Acts of Incorporation, "I am not at all convinced that apart from Statute, the rules of the 'Blue Book' must have been necessarily followed to attain a meeting of the congregation."²¹

Justice Graham countered this by pointing out that the local Act of Incorporation of St. Luke's congregation, passed in 1906, provided that special meetings of the congregation were to be called according to "The Rules and Forms of Procedure in the Church Courts of the Presbyterian Church in Canada." Stressing that these rules were still the constitution of St. Luke's, he went on to make this interesting point:

The rule of (congregational meetings being called only by the Session) plainly served the double purpose of prescribing the tactical course to be taken by those who proposed to move in congregational matters, and of shielding and safeguarding those who opposed action.²²

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 274.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 284.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 290.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 298.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 285.

²² *Ibid.*, 299.

He concluded, in agreement with Justices Rogers and Carroll, that since these rules of the Presbyterian Church had not been “substantially complied with,” the meeting of 27 July had to be considered irregularly called and illegally held, and its decision null and void. This point of view was to prevail in later actions.

There was great confusion as to the status of the elders of St. Luke’s. It was unclear whether some or all of them had resigned after 10 June 1925. Chief Justice Harris stated that Dr. Johnston thought the elders had resigned, yet there was no clear evidence that they had or that their resignations had been acted upon. Uncertainty and contradictions prevailed. Election of new elders had been discussed, but no action taken. In the meantime, the continuing Presbytery had appointed assessor elders to act with Dr. Johnston.

Some of the elders had indicated a willingness to resign in the interests of the peace of the congregation, but there is no record that any formal action was taken. Some elders told some people they had resigned yet told others they had not. Such confusion added to the complexity of the situation. It raised questions about who belonged to the Session and who did not, who could act and who could not. It also made it essential that regular rules of procedure be followed. Justice Graham wrote:

It is not material that the moderator mistakenly assumed that the elders resigned; but it is important that some of the elders themselves told non-concurring members of the congregation that they and their fellow elders had resigned. They gave such members reason to ignore the notice, and to believe that they might safely absent themselves, as they subsequently did, from a congregational meeting irregularly called by persons, who from their own statements appeared no longer to be in office. They at least made it more necessary that proceedings be clothed with prescribed formality.²³

The justices also considered whether the property of St. Luke’s would have gone to the United Church by virtue of the 27 July meeting if the meeting had been declared valid. One justice felt that a further meeting would have been required to deal specifically with property; however, the prevailing view was that, had the 27 July meeting been valid, the property would have gone to the United Church. Given that the meeting was not valid, however, the property remained Presbyterian.

Justice Graham recommended that Dr. Johnston call a Session meeting at the earliest opportunity and arrange for a legitimate meeting for the taking of a legitimate second congregational vote. If he should fail to do so, then such a meeting should be ordered by a “judge of this court.” Such a meeting was never held, however, because of the further court appeals. After the judgments of both the Supreme Court of Canada and the Privy Council, there would have been no point in following Justice Graham’s recommendation: both courts declared the provincial legislation authorizing such a meeting and second vote *ultra vires*.

Appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada

In its decision given in February 1929, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the decision of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court by a four to one margin.²⁴ Consideration here was on

²³ *Ibid.*, 300.

²⁴ *Trustees of St. Luke's Presbyterian Congregation of Salt Springs v. Cameron*, [1929] S.C.R. 452.

two main questions, namely, the regularity or not of the 27 July meeting and the terms of the provincial legislation under which this meeting was held in relation to the federal legislation, the *United Church of Canada Act*.

Justice Duff, the only Supreme Court justice to support the United Church point of view, stated as of 10 June 1925, all non-concurrent congregations had been free of all denominational affiliations and were no longer bound by the regulations of the *Book of Forms*. Therefore, strict adherence to the *Book of Forms* was unnecessary in the case of St. Luke's and was impossible under the circumstances. He declared: "What is required is a meeting fairly called in a manner conforming to the customary procedure in such a degree as is reasonably practicable, and, having regard to the disruption, fairly demanded in the circumstances of the particular case."²⁵ He felt that the elders had been entitled to act as they had inasmuch as they alone represented the congregation. Since Dr. Johnston's position of interim-moderator, in his view, ceased as of 10 June, they did not require his presence to hold a meeting. He wrote, "In the circumstances, it would appear that the elders did everything that could reasonably be required of them."²⁶

Chief Justice Anglin did not concern himself greatly with these points. The other justices — namely, Newcombe, Rinfret, and Smith — agreed in declaring that the rules of the Presbyterian Church in Canada continued to apply to St. Luke's after 10 June and since these were not fulfilled, the meeting of 27 July was irregular and "failed of its purpose." The statute required that a meeting for voting purposes be regularly called and held, and in the absence of specific statutory provisions to this end the regulations of the Church must prevail. Since these had not been fulfilled, the vote taken on 27 July was of no value. They also claimed that observing the regulations was important because it was dangerous to assume (as the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia had done) that the same results would have followed if the necessary preliminaries had been observed.

On the second question, of the competence of the provincial Act to bring a congregation into union by means of a second vote, Justice Duff stated that the way for such a vote had been cleared under the *Act Respecting the Union of Certain Churches Therein Named*, section 8(a), which read:

Should such congregation decide in the manner aforesaid (at a congregational meeting regularly called) at any later time to enter the union and become part of the United Church, then this Act shall apply to the congregation and all the property thereof from the date of such decision.²⁷

He stated that this provision and the federal Act had been intended for such cases as St. Luke's. They were not made invalid because they had not been properly drafted in every detail or reflected "infelicities of draftsmanship" as he put it.

The other four justices, however, interpreted the legislation to the effect that since the provincial Act was intended to deal with property, it was not competent to provide for a congregation to decide to enter the same United Church it had already decided under federal law not to enter. Justice Smith declared that the provincial Act could not introduce a congregation into a Dominion corporation (which the United Church of Canada was) when that congregation had already excluded itself by its vote of non-concurrence under

²⁵ Acland, 463.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 464.

²⁷ Nova Scotia, *An Act Respecting the Union of Certain Churches Therein Named*, 1924, Chapter 122.

the federal Act. "Even if the meeting had been regular, it was ineffective to carry either the congregation or its property into the union." Chief Justice Anglin stated that the congregation, having voted to be out of union under the federal Act, had voted out once and for all, and no such second vote could bring it in. He introduced a further point, too. As he interpreted the legislation, a second vote in Nova Scotia could be held only if a first meeting and vote had been held after 10 June 1925. Since this had not been the case, there was all the more reason to declare the meeting of 27 July invalid.

Justice Newcombe stated that the provincial Act was incompetent to reverse a decision reached under federal law, especially in this case because the conditions in which section 8(a) of the Nova Scotia Act were intended to operate never, in fact, existed. Like his associates, he indicated that even if the meeting of 27 July had been regularly called, its purpose was to reverse a statutory election or option which, having been already competently exercised, could not be revoked by the congregation. Furthermore, the federal Act, which alone was competent to determine membership in the United Church, did not have provision for a second vote for non-concurring congregations to enter union. In short, the Supreme Court of Canada held that after the union of 10 June 1925, there was no means by which the congregation could enter the United Church.

Appeal to the Privy Council, United Kingdom

The United Church then carried the case to the Privy Council in the United Kingdom. In its judgment as printed, the Council paid little attention to the question on which the various court actions in Canada had been based and decided the legality or otherwise of the congregational meeting and vote of 27 July 1925. The Privy Council considered that this point had been adequately discussed and settled in the Canadian courts. Instead, the members addressed themselves to the validity of the provincial legislation under which the meeting was held and determined it to be invalid. They declared:

It is obvious that the meeting was open to criticism in matters of procedure, but their Lordships do not feel called upon to enter upon the question whether such criticism was necessarily fatal to the validity of the decision then taken. If such a decision, even if taken by a meeting otherwise unexceptionably regular, would have been, as their Lordships hold, without competent statutory warrant, it becomes unnecessary to discuss the numerous alleged irregularities of procedure charged against it which are discussed at great length in the judgments of the learned judges who considered the case in Canada. In the result their lordships find themselves in general agreement with the view of the case taken by the learned Chief Justice of Canada which had the support of Newcombe, Rinfret and Smith JJ . . . ²⁸

Regarding the status of Rev. Robert Johnston and his appointment as interim-moderator both before and after 10 June 1925, "Their Lordships are not prepared to pronounce upon the position occupied by Mr. Johnston and do not find it necessary for the disposal of the case to do so."

At the outset, the judgment stated that having voted out of union under federal law, St. Luke's congregation could vote itself in only under federal law. The federal Act did recognize the possibility of a non-concurring congregation becoming a member of the

²⁸ Appeal Cases of the Privy Council, 1930, 684-85.

United Church; however, it failed to provide any means whereby such a later union could be effected. Even if detailed procedures for the late reception of non-concurring congregations that changed their minds had been provided, it was declared that the vote of 27 July 1925 could not be treated as a decision to apply to the United Church for admission. St. Luke's, having voted out of union under federal law, could not then turn around and vote itself in under provincial law. As stated, having voted out under federal law, it could vote in only under the same federal law. Since the federal law made no provision for a congregation's change of heart, a late admission was impossible to implement. Property also must be subject to the original vote.

The federal Act provided guidelines on who would enter the United Church of Canada on 10 June 1925, how this would be decided in the six months before then, and how the rights and interests of both those who entered union and those who did not were protected.

Now the congregation of St. Luke's with which this appeal is concerned, at a meeting of the congregation held on December 22, 1924, as to whose regularity no question is raised, duly decided by a majority not to enter the union.²⁹

This declaration stood unaltered at 10 June 1925, and under the *United Church of Canada Act*, St. Luke's accordingly remained outside the union and came within all the provisions of the Act applicable to non-concurring congregations.

The Nova Scotia Act, the *Act Respecting the Union of Certain Churches Therein Named*, concerned the property rights of congregations entering union and congregations not entering it. The provincial Act provided for congregational decisions on the question during the six months after 10 June 1925, rather than during the six months before that date, as in the federal Act.

The Dominion Act [the *United Church of Canada Act*] provides for a congregation remaining outside the union by a vote taken before union while the Provincial Act provides only for taking a congregation out of union after it has been brought in. Sect. 8 (a) of the Nova Scotia Act does not, however, profess to enable congregations, on the one hand, to decide not to concur within six months after the incorporation of the United Church or, on the other hand, at any later time to decide to enter the union. It assumes the taking of such decision by a congregation and prescribes what shall be the effects thereof on property.³⁰

"Their Lordships are of opinion that S.8 (a) does not competently authorize" a congregation which has decided within six months before 10 June 1925 not to concur in the union subsequently deciding to enter the union, with the consequential effects on church property prescribed by section 8(a).

The constitution of the United Church was a matter solely for the Parliament of Canada, and it was for that Parliament to define the conditions of membership of the corporation which it set up. The Provincial Legislature could not competently alter the conditions of membership of the United Church and nowhere avowedly attempts to do so. Sect. 8 a of the Provincial Act in providing certain consequences as regards property which are to follow decisions of congregations either not to concur in the union or to enter the union does not and could not properly empower congregations to take such decisions affecting,

²⁹ Ibid., 678.

³⁰ Ibid., 680.

as they must necessarily do, the constitution of the United Church. If such decisions cannot be taken consistently with the constitution of the United Church as defined by the Parliament of Canada, then the consequences as regards property of such decisions cannot become operative.³¹

The Privy Council recognized that both federal and provincial statutes made reference to congregations received into the United Church after the union.

No procedure, however, is prescribed in the Dominion statute for the reception of a congregation into the United Church after June 10, 1925, nor is it specified how an effective decision may be taken by a congregation with a view to its reception. As the Provincial statute could not, in their Lordship's view effect the subsequent entry of a congregation into the union the case has thus not been competently provided for in either statute.³²

Their Lordships then considered whether the resolution of 27 July 1925 could be treated as a decision of St. Luke's to apply to the United Church for reception. They judged that there were "insuperable difficulties in the way of so interpreting the situation." The provincial Act stated that it was to apply to any congregation deciding in favour of union at a later date "and all the property thereof from the date of such decision." But an application for reception takes time to process and has always the possibility of rejection. Therefore, from this point of view this provision could not apply from the date of decision.

If the words of the concluding sentence of s. 8 (a) in their literal sense imply a power on the part of a congregation to enter the union at their own hand, then this enactment was beyond the competence of the Provincial Legislature as affecting the constitution of the United Church which was a matter solely for the Parliament of Canada.

Their Lordships noted the point also raised earlier by Chief Justice Anglin of the Supreme Court of Canada and agreed that a later decision to enter the union presupposed under section 8(a) of the Nova Scotia Act a previous decision not to concur in the union and this "previous decision would apparently have to be one taken within six months after the union." The previous decision in the case of St. Luke's was taken within six months before the union. Again, the validity of the meeting of 27 July 1925 is denied. The amendment to the Nova Scotia Act, passed on 7 May 1925, enables the decision of St. Luke's not to enter the union, taken on 22 December 1924, to be valid for the purpose of the Nova Scotia Act and the distribution of property, but it does not qualify as a precedent decision required as a condition for a decision at a later time, or after 10 June 1925, to enter the union. This section required a decision not to enter union to be taken during the six months after 10 June 1925 and then another vote sometime after that. On this basis, also, the meeting of 27 July 1925 was considered invalid.

The Aftermath of Strife and Court Actions

Many unionists had considered the church union bill to have been perfectly drawn, leaving no loopholes for possible litigation. Regardless of how the bill was originally presented,

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 682.

as finally adopted, it proved to be somewhat less than perfect. And as this case further bears out, in its final form, the *United Church of Canada Act* did not adequately harmonize with the various provincial acts. After five years of strife and expensive court actions, the original decision of 22 December 1924 prevailed, and the property remained with the Presbyterians as it does to this day. (Yet even as I write this text, active negotiations are under way between the Presbyterian and United churches, the object being to arrange a co-operative ministry in Salt Springs.³³)

³³ An item of interest: In the Supreme Court case, Alexander Cameron (no relation) was identified as the key plaintiff on the United Church side. Cameron was eventually buried from St. Luke's United Church, which is almost beside St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, by the Reverend Douglas Gass, the United Church minister of the day. Gass and I grew up on the same street in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, and later both ministered in the Charlottetown area at the same time.

Reflections on 25 Years of Writing about Indian Residential Schools

Peter Bush

Autobiography is fraught with challenges. Such writing often lacks depth of insight, becoming self-justification, while offering no new understanding of the narrator's actions or the situations described. I hope that this exercise in autobiography moves beyond self-congratulation to offer readers some new understanding into the last 25 years of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's relationship with its Confession regarding Indian Residential Schools. This paper focuses primarily on my writing about the history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and Indian Residential Schools because that is how I have engaged the question for most of the past quarter-century.

I have largely been outside the decision-making processes at the national level of the Presbyterian Church regarding the Confession and policy making pertaining to healing and reconciliation. So, when I write about the actions of national structures, I do so as one who analyzes the actions and impacts as an outsider. I write from my perspective. Even though I try to listen carefully to a variety of Indigenous and Settler voices, I write from no other perspective than my own.

Living up to the words of the apology — or, in the case of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Confession — is a long process. Agreeing to the words as a denomination and formally presenting the words to the Indigenous community is but the start of an engagement with their meaning. For apology, or confession, to become part of an organization's DNA, there must be a commitment to living into a new way of being. To put this in its simplest terms: There is a difference between saying "we are sorry" and *being* sorry. The former is much less costly than the latter.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Confession and Settlement Agreement

A summary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's move towards the Confession and subsequent process towards healing and reconciliation will provide a context upon which to hang what comes next. In the spring of 1991, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops held a consultation about Indian Residential Schools and the Presbyterian Church was among the invited observers. The Presbyterian representatives returned from the consultation and began research about the Presbyterian experience with the schools. That research led to a small committee being sent to listen to School Survivors, and the committee drafted a Confession, presented to the 1992 General Assembly. The Assembly referred the document back for further work. The Confession was adopted by the 1994 Assembly.

In the summer of 1998, the first lawsuit from a former student naming the Presbyterian Church in Canada arrived in the office of the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly. Legal counsel was engaged. As the four historic churches (Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and United) saw the lawsuits pile up, they appealed to the government of Canada to engage in dialogue about a way ahead. By 2001, the conversation was so strained that

the churches shut their archives to all researchers seeking information on Indian Residential Schools. To help break the logjam, the federal government entered into bilateral conversations with the churches, and in late 2002, the Presbyterian Church and the government achieved an agreement regarding the scope of the Presbyterian Church's financial liability.

With the election of Phil Fontaine to a second term as Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in 2003, there was renewed commitment among the churches and the AFN to resolve the question of compensation to Survivors. In late 2005, the Settlement Agreement was announced. The Agreement included the Survivors' commitment to funding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a suggestion that the government of Canada issue an apology. The federal government through Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized on 11 June 2008, and after a false start, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began its work in early 2010. The Commission completed its work in 2015. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation continues its work. The Presbyterian Church has been part of the process throughout as one of the signatory parties to the Settlement Agreement.

My Growing Awareness of the Indian Residential Schools and Early Writing

My connection with the Indian Residential Schools began in 1989. My wife and I had just arrived in Flin Flon, Manitoba, where I was taking up my first pastoral charge as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. That fall CBC-TV ran the drama *Where the Spirit Lives* which tells the story of a Residential School student who ran away from the abuses of the school. In the fall of 1990, Phil Fontaine disclosed to a group of Indigenous high-school students in Manitoba that he had been abused at the school he attended (he was careful to say he had not been sexually abused). This disclosure led to his famous interview with Barbara Frum on CBC's *The Journal*. This string of events made me aware of the Residential Schools.

In September 1991, at a lunchtime Presbytery of Brandon meeting, the Reverend Richard Sand talked about being asked by the Board of World Mission to arrange for some people from the national Presbyterian Church offices, together with himself, to listen to the stories of former students of Presbyterian Indian Residential Schools. In March 1992, I was at the Board of World Mission meeting where the first draft of the denomination's Confession was introduced. All of this was, to use the politicized words, *consciousness raising*, for the now 30-year-old minister from Flin Flon off to be a commissioner to General Assembly for the first time.

That Assembly (1992), held in Hamilton, Ontario, was an eye-opening experience on many levels, but for the purposes of this paper, I limit my comments to these: during the debate about the Confession it was clear that most commissioners did not know the Presbyterian Church had operated schools, knew little if anything about what had happened in the schools, and could not have located the two schools the denomination operated post-1925 — Cecilia Jeffrey and Birtle — on a map let alone the nine schools connected with the denomination between the 1880s and 1970. The debate included arguments against the Confession because of its perceived disrespect to mission staff, especially the Women's Missionary Society (WMS), which had worked in the schools with selfless devotion. The

suggestion was also made that if the Church admitted wrongdoing, then the Church would get sued. The lack of knowledge rather than the other two responses was what stayed with me; however, if I had paid closer attention, those responses would have warned me of stormy waters ahead.

I have always wanted to write academically. From Grade 3 on I have been fascinated by the idea of saying or discovering something no one else has said or discovered. I pride myself on thinking like a historian, and I am pleased when people call me that. At the 1992 Assembly I had been handed a topic about which no one seemed to be writing.¹

For the May 1993 Learned's (now "Congress") gathering of the Canadian Society of Church History, I submitted a proposal for a paper. The paper would look at the two schools — Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey — the Presbyterian Church had operated after 1925. The proposal was accepted, and I was thrilled. Even though I was in Flin Flon, far moved from sites of higher learning, I was going to be able to present a paper at an academic conference.

In March 1993, I planned a research trip to the PCC Archives to read through material, a trip that coincided with my serving on a committee of the national church. The first day in Archives was fruitful and stimulating — I could see the paper taking shape. When I arrived for my second day of research, though, I was told I could not see the material I had looked at the previous day or any other WMS material related to Residential Schools. I was hurt. I was devastated. I was angry. I did not understand how what I had been doing the day before was okay and now less than 24 hours later, it was not. The distrust was palpable. I was a minister of the Presbyterian Church, distrusted by the Church I served. My self-understanding as "a pastor-theologian" was at risk. How was I to write the paper for the Learned's without seeing the archival material? I remember calling my wife from the GO station on Yonge Street, where I was waiting for the bus to the airport. I was in tears.

When I got home to Flin Flon, I wrote to Tam Corbett, then president of the WMS, expressing my anger and hurt, my feeling of being distrusted. It was on Corbett's instructions that I had been locked out of the WMS Records. In the end, a compromise was reached: I did not have the time to travel to Toronto for another research trip before the paper presentation, so I put in \$600 and the WMS put in \$600 to have 12 boxes of archival material microfilmed and the microfilm shipped to Flin Flon. That was the basis of my research. The rolls of film were then added to the PCC Archives collection.

I presented my paper to a packed house at Learned's, held at Carleton University, in May 1993. An edited version of my paper was published in *Presbyterian History* in October 1993. That piece concludes with these words:

As the leaders in the schools lost their spiritual focus, it became easier for racist, abusive, and de-humanizing forms of the leadership to enter the school. . . . The loss of the spiritual vision, meant that the schools became the perpetrators of the dominant society, oppressing and destroying Native life and culture through a belief in the "rightness" of the "Canadian social religion."²

The Confession was adopted by the 1994 General Assembly in June.

¹ That is always the problem for people outside the academy: trying to write *for* the academy but being out of touch with the latest research and projects of people *inside* the academy.

² Peter Bush, "The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Native Residential Schools, 1925–1969," *Presbyterian History* (October 1993): 7. Reprinted in *Presbyterian Record*, November 1994, 15–18.

Writing *Western Challenge*

In 1995, the Reverend Dr. Jim Marnoch, former staff at Cecilia Jeffrey and long-time minister of Presbyterian congregations in Winnipeg Presbytery, invited me to complete his history of the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. I agreed with some conditions: first, to have the freedom to write the book thematically; second, to make sure that Marnoch had read my previous writing about Residential Schools so he would have fewer surprises with the completed work; and third, to have the book cover the period of 1885 to 1925. He was comfortable with these conditions. I was off on another writing project, the biggest I had ever done.

In 1996, my family moved to Mitchell, Ontario, which meant that the Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives and the United Church of Canada Archives were only two-and-a-half hours away on a good driving day. So, one or two days a month I was in one of the two Archives. I developed a plan to have the book published by the fall of 2000.

One day in 1999 I was in the PCC Archives and came across photocopies made at the Public Archives of Canada from RG-10, material related to Indian Residential Schools. As the Presbyterian Church archivist told me, she had simply photocopied every document in the collection that said “Presbyterian,” “Birtle,” or “Cecilia Jeffrey.” She had done so as part of the Church’s efforts to defend itself against the lawsuits that had begun to come in.

As a researcher I saw this was a treasure trove. I didn’t need to go to Ottawa — it was right there in the PCC Archives. I had a wonderful half-day working my way through the box, but there was so much material of interest I could not complete my work that day. I returned the next day, only to be told that I would not be given access to the box and that I had to speak to the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly, the Reverend Stephen Kendall, as to why.

So, I stormed off to see Kendall, described the project, explained I was hardly seeking to damage the Church, and stated I could drive to Ottawa and see the exact same thing as was in the box downstairs. I argued that making me drive to Ottawa was bad financial and ecological stewardship (that last argument I thought was a brilliant appeal to Scottish Presbyterian frugality). Kendall listened patiently and told me he would consult the Church’s lawyers and get back to me. He indicated he would consult them as soon as I left his office. Now very frustrated, I paced the halls of 50 Wynford Drive as an angry researcher.

The long and the short of it was the lawyers said: “No, he cannot see the material. It is work product.” I had trouble remaining calm in the face of such an argument; indeed, Kendall may not have felt that I did. So, I was locked out of the box, I never went to Ottawa to do research, and almost nothing from RG-10 appears in *Western Challenge*. The book was launched by the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario in October 2000. One of seven chapters deals with ministry by the PCC with Indigenous people on the Prairies.³

In retrospect, I realize how tone deaf I was to the pressures faced by Kendall and others within the Church’s national structures. The number of lawsuits was rising, and the government of Canada showed little interest in helping the churches. Indeed, it sometimes added the churches as co-defendants in lawsuits brought against it. My thinking and actions

³ Peter Bush, *Western Challenge: The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Mission on the Prairies and North, 1885–1925* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 2000); see chap. 3, pages 86–121.

were shaped by an internal research drive and my conviction, as noted earlier, that the Church had lost its spiritual way in operating the schools and, therefore, had done wrong that must be acknowledged.

At the Start of the Millennium: Writing on the History of the Schools

At the Assembly in June 2000, the Reverend Dr. Barry Mack introduced a motion that was adopted:

That the Residential Schools Working Group, in consultation with the Committee on History, post a historical statement on Presbyterian involvement in native schools on the Church web site, and that such statement also include reports on ongoing Alternate Dispute Resolutions, reconciliation efforts and projects funded by the Journey to Wholeness campaign.⁴

As the newly minted convener of the Committee on History, I attended a meeting in the early fall of 2000 where I agreed to write the “historical statement”; the other parts were to be written by other hands. I checked out what the United Church and Anglicans had done. I much preferred the approach the Anglicans had taken and modelled my contribution on J. R. Miller’s essay on the Anglican Church website. I wrote a 7,000-word piece full of stories. In early 2001, I submitted the piece, and it produced consternation at the church offices in Toronto. Keith Knight, associate secretary for communications of the Life and Mission Agency, reported reactions like these: “it admits to more than we are prepared to admit to,” “the piece demonstrates a great deal of research, it is a good academic piece but not suitable for the website,” and “we were hoping for a boring historical piece, like names of the schools and dates they operated.” When I told my father about the last comment he laughed and said: “They asked you to write the piece. What did they expect they were going to get? You couldn’t write boring history if you tried.” (I am not sure whether that is, in fact, true; after all, he is my father.)

The article died and was never posted; instead, a “boring” historical piece went up with the names of schools and dates. In 2001, the Church was not ready to own the truth of what happened in the schools. Seven years after the adoption of the Confession, the Church was afraid of anything that might put it at fiduciary risk, even though that meant not letting the story be told as completely as possible. The lawsuits were continuing to mount. From the perspective of someone outside the Residential Schools Working Group, that committee’s primary purpose appeared to be protecting the Church from financial harm.

In late 2001, the Committee on History, in a concerted effort to increase the profile of women’s histories within the Presbyterian Church, began gathering essays that would become the second volume of *Gifts and Graces*. The first collection of women’s biographies had been well received. I proposed writing the story of Catherine (Kate) Gillespie, the first female principal of an Indian Residential School and a creative teacher.

All went well until the conversation about what photograph should go with the article. I knew which one I wanted, and it was in the PCC Archives collection. The problem was that, given the ongoing concern about lawsuits and in response to the federal government counter-suing the churches whenever the government was sued, everyone but the Church’s

⁴ *Acts and Proceedings, 2000*, 126th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 38.

lawyers or their designates had been banned from access to anything related to Residential Schools. The ban meant that the photograph I wanted was not accessible for publication. How then to get it into the book? I happened to have a copy of the photograph which I had used in an earlier project. It appears in *Gifts and Graces*, listed as being from my collection (although anyone in the know realizes that I possess only a copy, not the original).⁵

This story is not particularly noteworthy except for what comes next. In the summer of 2002, my family visited Ottawa, and one thing on my “to see list” was a display of Indian Residential School photographs at the National Library. The display was wonderfully curated and deeply moving. Partway through the exhibit I saw a photo I was sure I had seen before. I believed I had seen it in the PCC Archives collection. The exhibit’s photo credits confirmed that the picture was from the PCC Archives. The National Library, an agency of the federal government — the same government that was suing the Church — had access to photos from the PCC Archives and could say where it got the photo. I, however, could not. From my perspective it appeared that the Indian Residential Schools portion of the PCC Archives was open to the government of Canada at a time when the Presbyterian Church’s public stance was that the Archives were closed to everyone. I found the inconsistency frustrating.

A Need to Reflect on the Confession

In the early years of the millennium, I became aware of the mounting lawsuits and the threat they posed to the Presbyterian Church; however, I tried consistently to argue that since the denomination had issued a confession, or apology, in which it outlined what it did wrong, it should have been open and transparent in its dealings with the former students who sued the Church. I understood the naïveté of such a position, but it was a position I believed to be biblical and in line with the Confession of 1994. Late in 2002, the Presbyterian Church signed a bilateral agreement with the government of Canada limiting the denomination’s liability in the face of the lawsuits.

At the 2003 Assembly in Guelph I introduced an additional motion asking for a reaffirmation of the Confession in time for the 2004 Assembly. The motion was passed by the Assembly, but as the Assembly minutes indicate, the motion’s passing was an opportunity to reflect on the work done in reaching the bilateral agreement whereby the Church’s financial liability was limited; it was not a call for the Church to reflect in a deeper way upon the meaning of the Confession and what reconciliation, walking with the Indigenous community, might mean. Nine years after adoption of the Confession, the Church was not ready to live deeply into the Confession.⁶

By 2004, I had been away from Manitoba for eight years, and there were no contexts in Mitchell to keep the Indian Residential Schools at the forefront of my thinking. My research interests had moved away from the West and Indian Residential Schools. I was quite certain that that chapter of my life was over.

⁵ Peter Bush, “Catherine Gillespie,” in *Gifts and Graces: Profiles of Canadian Presbyterian Women*, vol. 2, ed. John S. Moir (Toronto: Committee on History, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2002), 24–29.

⁶ *Acts and Proceedings, 2003*, 129th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 43.

Engagement with Truth and Reconciliation

The year 2007 brought a change, as we moved to Winnipeg. Quite quickly I was drawn into matters related to Residential Schools and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Since I had last been living in Manitoba two things had changed.

First, in the Settlement Agreement between the government and the School Survivors, the School Survivors had committed a portion of the compensation package to establish the TRC. The Commission had the support of the churches which hoped that this would promote reconciliation between Indigenous people and Settlers⁷ in Canada. In such a climate, the Church was open to acknowledging its errors and many in the Church were highly critical of those who had been involved with the schools. The winds were blowing in a different direction than they had in the first decade of my writing about the schools.

Second, I was no longer simply a researcher working in the Archives and emerging periodically to tell a new story about the schools. I was now being invited to join conversations with Indigenous people, with School Survivors, and to be part of planning processes for events. Such a significant change was challenging because I still saw myself primarily as a researcher, not as an active participant in moving towards reconciliation. Nonetheless, it was to that role I was being increasingly drawn.

In advance of the first launch of the TRC, the four historic churches held the cross-Canada “Remembering the Children” tour in 2008. There were stops in various cities. The Presbyterians were tagged to plan the Winnipeg event, and in the fall of 2007, I was invited to be the local Presbyterian point person. The event was held in March 2008 in the Forks Market with Elijah Harper as the keynote speaker and a packed house. This was the first time I had actively engaged with School Survivors and had helped to plan such an event.

Those connections led to my being invited by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to attend their gathering in downtown Winnipeg when Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the Government of Canada’s apology on 11 June 2008. Even though we were 1,500 miles away in Winnipeg and were watching the event on a screen, the atmosphere was electric. I was one of a handful of Settlers in the room — it was an emotional moment.

Finding Models for Involvement with Indigenous People

That fall at the annual general meeting of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History, I presented a paper on the 1908 summer gathering of Presbyterians working on reserves and in Residential Schools. The gathering resulted in evangelistic meetings through the 1908–1909 winter on every reserve and in every school where the Presbyterians had a ministry.

My choice of topic was intentional. I had felt the pendulum shift from ignorance about the schools and a belief that nothing bad had happened in them, to acknowledgment of the wrong done and an all-out rejection of the schools. This shift was leading, I feared, to the Church abandoning any attempt to live the Gospel message in its relationship with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. The 1908 summer gathering, with both Indigenous peoples

⁷ *Settlers* is a term used to encompass the waves of immigrants and the immigrants’ descendants who came to a land already inhabited by Indigenous peoples. Instead of the awkwardness of “non-Indigenous” and the imprecision of “Newcomer,” *Settlers* refers to all who are not Indigenous regardless of when their ancestors arrived or what their ethnicity is. It arises, in part, from the language of “settling the land,” a phrase common among the early non-Indigenous arrivals in Canada.

and Settlers working and reflecting together as equals, along with the clear call for language and cross-cultural training for all Settlers sent to work with Indigenous people, pointed a way ahead that might be imitated a century later.

With that paper a new vista opened in my writing about the Presbyterian Church's involvement with Indigenous people. I became interested in telling stories of Indigenous agency and Settlers seeking to cross the cultural divide in their approach, relationships, and articulation of the Gospel.⁸

Working for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The second set of TRC commissioners began their work in early 2010 and set the ambitious goal of holding a national event at the Forks of the Red and the Assiniboine rivers in Winnipeg in May. Given my work with "Remembering the Children," I was invited to help prepare for the occasion. Although the event was national with national players present, the church tent was very much a locally driven project, and I was at the table during much of the planning. When asked to take part in a panel conversation, as well, I felt humble.

Presbyterians from both Winnipeg and the national church attended the event or parts of it. The Presbytery of Winnipeg hosted a reception for the visiting staff from the national church offices. Reconciliation was on the map for the Presbytery, and I was in the middle of putting it there.

The academic conference that accompanied the national event gave me another opportunity to try out the new direction my writing had taken: telling the stories of people who could be held up as models for people in the present to reflect on as they sought to live towards healing and reconciliation with their Indigenous neighbours. I presented a paper focusing on Kate Gillespie and her sister Janet who served at the File Hills School in Saskatchewan from 1901 to 1905. Kate Gillespie, who had been the principal of the school, married W. R. Motherwell, and I had visited the Motherwell Homestead in Saskatchewan, which added new insight to my previous work. My paper was a risky piece in that I argued that Gillespie, while flawed, had sought to do good and was open to Indigenous ways. The response from the overflow audience was mixed, but one School Survivor spoke in warm terms about her mother's experience with Gillespie, which encouraged this new direction in my work.⁹

At that same conference, Dr. John Milloy, the TRC's first research director, suggested I respond to the TRC's call for research proposals. The TRC had set out a series of research questions they wanted answered and realizing that their staff team was too small to do the work desired, they invited proposals from outside researchers to help them achieve the project. One of the projects was titled "How the Churches Got to Sorry." I submitted a proposal and 18 months later it was assigned to me. Much of my free time in 2012 was spent working on the project. Partway through the year the TRC research department asked

⁸ Peter Bush, "Spoken with Native Languages': Presbyterian Evangelistic Efforts among the Native People of the Prairies, 1908–1909," *Canadian Society of Presbyterian History: Papers 2008*, 29–42.

⁹ Peter Bush, "The Gillespie Sisters and the File Hills Residential School, 1901–1908" (Prairie Perspectives on Indian Residential Schools, Truth and Reconciliation: A Conference during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's First National Event, sponsored by the Centre for Human Rights Research, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, June 2010).

if I would also explore what the churches had done to promote healing and reconciliation and develop a way to categorize the local projects and initiatives they were supporting.

Almost nothing of the first part of my work survived into the TRC's official report, although the conclusions and some of the discussion from the second part of the study did. Working for the TRC was an honour, and I found it interesting to even briefly function as a paid researcher.

An Issue for Reconciliation: The Land of the Former Cecilia Jeffery Indian Residential School

The story of the land at Shoal Lake, Ontario, is long and complicated, and it will be told here only briefly.

The first Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School was established in 1902 on a point of land in Shoal Lake (Lake of the Woods), more than 40 kilometres west of Kenora. Before the school's opening, the three First Nations that would be sending children to the school and the Presbyterian Church entered into an agreement about how the school was to operate. In 1929, the Cecilia Jeffery School and student residence were moved into a bigger building, which was, in Settler terms, in a more convenient location on the edge of Kenora. The land remained in the hands of the Presbyterian Church in Canada with ownership eventually residing with the Presbytery of Winnipeg. For many years the land was used as a summer camp, but by the 1980s the land's remote location as well as changing demographics among Presbyterians in Manitoba made the camp idea untenable. Early in the new millennium Winkler Bible Camp rented the property for two summers and then entered a lease-to-own relationship with the Presbytery of Winnipeg.

The lease-to-own agreement was brought into question with the return of Eli Mandamin to Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation and his re-election as band chief in March 2010. The Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation managed the lakeshore parking lot at Kejick Post Office, the logical and most efficient place for camp staff and campers to get into boats for the trip to the camp. In June 2010, the Band Council informed Winkler Bible Camp that unless Winkler brought the Presbytery of Winnipeg to the negotiating table to talk to Iskatewizaagegan, Winkler campers and staff would not be allowed to park during the 2011 camping season. This action brought the Presbytery into face-to-face conversation with chief and council. Just as there had been a change in leadership at Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation, there had been some personnel changes in the Presbytery of Winnipeg, including my being the new chairperson of the Outreach Committee, charged with entering a conversation with the First Nations communities about the land.

At the first meeting between representatives of the Presbytery and of Iskatewizaagegan in the fall of 2010, the First Nations leaders referenced the 13-point Agreement as seminal in the conversation. With the Agreement playing an important role, through the late fall the conversation expanded to include Shoal Lake No. 40 First Nation and Northwest Angle No. 37 First Nation. The winter of 2010–2011 was busy with working through a resolution of the land issue. At an official meeting on 7 April 2011, the Presbytery voted to transfer stewardship (title) of the 210 acres to a yet-to-be-created entity representing the three First Nations that had signed the 1902 Agreement. Any other result would have made the efforts at reconciliation in which Winnipeg Presbyterians were involved meaningless.

During this time, I found myself being stretched in many ways. For instance, sometimes I was the only Settler in the room. It took time to build trust and for both sides to move beyond rhetoric to dialogue. The opportunity to reverse the Presbytery of Winnipeg's decision about Shoal Lake land was gratifying because a more just solution was realized. In 2015, I presented a paper on the story of the land at a Trent University conference.¹⁰

Speaking Confession

Through the urging of School Survivors, in 2013, Grand Council Treaty #3, which covers Kenora and Northwestern Ontario, erected commemorative cairns at the sites of the Indian Residential Schools within Treaty #3 territory. In August 2013, I was invited on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to speak words of apology, or confession, at the commemoration gathering at the Round Lake (Kenora) site of the Cecilia Jeffery School.

Being asked to speak in such a context was humbling. I found it to be a profoundly moving moment to speak the simple, but stark words, "We were wrong, and I am sorry."

This experience, coming so quickly on the heels of my work on the Confession for the TRC, opened yet another set of questions. I became interested in the ways in which confession, or apology, is spoken and, in particular, in the importance of apology repetition in new contexts — both geographically and in time. Speaking apology in a new time and context gives it new life and reaffirms an ongoing commitment to walking together, something central to reconciliation. I presented papers playing with these ideas at conferences in Winnipeg in 2015 and 2016.¹¹

In 2017, I had another opportunity to speak confession. The Regina Industrial School was a Presbyterian-run Residential School which closed in 1910. As part of reconciliation, churches in Regina and the First Nations community hold annual walks together. As moderator of the 2017 General Assembly, I accepted an invitation to be present for the walk in July and to give a short speech.

Again, saying the words "My church did wrong, and I am sorry" proved to be an emotionally moving and humbling experience.

What We Have Learned — or Not

Several times over the last 25 years I have felt I have done all the research or writing about the schools I could do. Yet, ever since the publishing of *Western Challenge* I have wanted to tell the story of Susette Blackbird and W. W. McLaren. In May 2017, I took that opportunity at the Restorying Canada Conference in Ottawa. So, as I now find myself writing about my writing about the Indian Residential Schools, perhaps I have reached the end of my work on this topic.

Many more people know about the schools now (2017) than they did in 1992 when I began writing; however, I do not think that the general public is any better informed about

¹⁰ Peter Bush, "Contesting the Land: Ownership and Meaning at the Site of Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, Shoal Lake, Ontario" (Contesting Canada's Future, Trent University, Peterborough, May 2015).

¹¹ Peter Bush, "'Performing Apology': The Canadian Churches' Apologies about Indian Residential Schools" (Emerging Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies in Canada Conference, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, MB, June 2015); and Peter Bush, "Repeating the Apologies: Fuel for Walking Together towards Reconciliation" (Pathways to Reconciliation Conference, University of Winnipeg, MB, June 2016) (forthcoming).

the nuances of the schools. Nor do I think that members see the parallels between the many Indigenous children now in state care and the Residential Schools. Canadians may know about the Residential Schools and the Church may have confessed its sin, but I am not convinced that we have learned anything.

My Publications and Conference Papers on Indian Residential Schools, the Confession, and Relations between Indigenous People and the Church

- “Susette Blackbird and W. W. McLaren: An Unexpected Love Story” (Restorying Canada: Reconsidering Religion and Public Memory, University of Ottawa, ON, May 2017).
- “Repeating the Apologies: Fuel for Walking Together towards Reconciliation” (Pathways to Reconciliation Conference, University of Winnipeg, MB, June 2016) (forthcoming).
- “The Canadian Churches’ Apologies for Colonialism and Residential Schools, 1986–1998,” *Peace Research: The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 47, nos. 1–2 (2015): 47–70.
- “‘Performing Apology’: The Canadian Churches’ Apologies about Indian Residential Schools” (Emerging Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies in Canada Conference, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, MB, June 2015).
- “Contesting the Land: Ownership and Meaning at the Site of Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, Shoal Lake, Ontario” (Contesting Canada’s Future Conference, Trent University, Peterborough, ON, May 2015).
- “Health and Nutrition at Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School, 1946–1954,” *Presbyterian History* (Fall 2014): 1–3.
- “Charlie Wenjack and the Indian Residential School System,” *Presbyterian History* (Fall 2014): 4–5.
- “The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Mission to Canada’s Native Peoples, 1900–2000,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 36, no. 2 (July 2012): 115–20.
- “The Gillespie Sisters and the File Hills Residential School, 1901–1908” (Prairie Perspectives on Indian Residential Schools, Truth and Reconciliation: A Conference during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s First National Event, sponsored by the Centre for Human Rights Research, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, June 2010).
- “‘Spoken with Native Languages’: Presbyterian Evangelistic Efforts among the Native People of the Prairies, 1908–1909,” *Canadian Society of Presbyterian History: Papers 2008*, 29–42.
- “The Native Residential School System and the Presbyterian Church in Canada,” *Presbyterian History* (May 2004): 1–4.
- “Catherine Gillespie,” in *Gifts and Graces: Profiles of Canadian Presbyterian Women*, vol. 2, ed. John S. Moir (Toronto: Committee on History, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2002), 24–29.
- “... Also Our Own People’: Presbyterian Native Ministry on the Prairies,” *Western Challenge: The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Mission on the Prairies and North, 1885–1925* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 2000), 86–121.
- “The Rev. Hugh MacKay and the Riel Rebellion: A Letter to the Foreign Missions Committee,” *Presbyterian History* (November 2000): 1–4.
- “The Dakota Missionaries of the Presbyterian Church, 1877–1903,” *Presbyterian History* (October 1996): 1–5.
- “The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Native Residential Schools, 1925–1969,” *Presbyterian History* (October 1993): 1–7. Reprinted in *Presbyterian Record* (November 1994): 15–18.
- “The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Native Residential Schools, 1925–1969,” *Canadian Society of Church History Historical Papers, 1993*, 175–86.

The first part of the book is a historical overview of the field of research on the development of language. It covers the period from the 1950s to the present, and discusses the major theories and findings of the field. The second part of the book is a critical analysis of the major theories and findings of the field. It discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each theory and finding, and offers suggestions for future research.

Development and Language in the Home: The Role of the Family in the Child's Language Development

The third part of the book is a critical analysis of the major theories and findings of the field. It discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each theory and finding, and offers suggestions for future research. The fourth part of the book is a critical analysis of the major theories and findings of the field. It discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each theory and finding, and offers suggestions for future research.

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